

Staying Alive: A Contemporary Rejuvenation of the *Biji*

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Certificate Of Original Authorship

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

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Abstract

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In 1998 John Minford and Tong Man attempted to transpose to contemporary English an excerpt from the Qing era *biji* *Liao-chai chih-yi* [*Strange Stories From A Chinese Studio*], by Pu Songling. In the wake of this attempt Douglas Coupland, Ouyang Yu, and Owen Kelly have all published contemporary English language *biji*. This thesis will analyse, and contextualise, the most recent development in this centuries-old form. Following analysis of the four contemporary *biji* above I will propose a selection of texts that could be included within this budding corpus.

The creative component of this thesis, titled *Arrayed Miscellaneous Notes On Fear & Loneliness*, offers another potential example of contemporary English language *biji*. Reflecting the influence of the Paris-based writing group Oulipo on the methodology used during the theoretical research, *Arrayed Miscellaneous Notes On Fear & Loneliness* explores the potential for the *biji* as a textual site conducive to constraint and experimentation.

